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Off-Shore Oil Drilling Fails House Vote; Westly Calls on Voters to Keep Up Pressure

SACRAMENTO – State Controller Steve Westly called today’s House of Representatives vote on extending the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Moratorium on offshore oil drilling an early victory for California and the nation.

The House of Representatives voted 157-262 against an attempt by Rep. John Peterson (R-PA) to open the OCS moratorium waters for offshore natural gas drilling. California environmental groups and legislators have long contested the planned drilling along the Santa Barbara coast.

“We should all take a collective sigh of relief that the offshore drilling plan failed in the House,” Controller Westly said. “However, it is important to note that the real fight is just ahead of us in the Senate.”

Controller Westly has a history of championing the environment. Most recently, on May 9, 2005, Controller Westly sent a letter to California’s public officials, including Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, asking them to immediately oppose any energy measure in Congress that threatens to allow oil drilling off the state’s coast.

As a State Lands Commission member, Westly helped pass a resolution urging President Bush and Congress to continue the 24-year offshore oil and gas-leasing moratorium.

As a member of CalPERS, Controller Westly also supported a resolution calling on oil giant ChevronTexaco to carefully consider its next step in oil exploration in environmentally protected and sensitive areas. CalPERS holds more than 19 million shares in ChevronTexaco.

Today’s House vote on the moratorium includes sensitive areas in Oregon, Washington and the Eastern seaboard.

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